

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-7 and 11-12 remain in the application. Independent claim 7 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 8-10 and, therefore, claims 8-10 have been cancelled.

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Nakanishi et al. (US 2004/0088170) as set forth on pages 2-10 of the Office Action dated December 27, 2007.

Nakanishi et al. relates to a computer-readable information storage medium stored with a content charging program used to charge a user when the user downloads and outputs a content, such as an image file, from a content server through a computer network represented by the Internet. The program is installed on a user terminal and is equipped with attribute information detecting means for detecting attribute information for controlling use of a content, attribute information interpreting means, decode means for decoding the content according to the attribute information thus interpreted, and data control means for controlling output/use and carrying out processing of charging at the output/use time. The program is used to carry out the charging at the use time in connection with processing of carrying out authentication for content use and charging to a user. All of the charging information is managed by the single commerce server (see paragraphs 0116-0122 and 0177 and 0184 of Nakanishi et al.).

Claim 1 of this application is directed to a wide area network printing system so configured that a contents server providing various information is operated to send print data to a document server via the Internet, and the document server is operated to send

the print data to a remotely installed image forming apparatus via the Internet to allow the image forming apparatus to print the print data. The contents server of claim 1 includes "data sending/receiving means which communicates various data including print data with a communications terminal of a user and the document server." The contents server of claim 1 also has "data storage means which stores the print data therein." The contents server of claim 1 further has "controlling means which controls the data storage means to read out the print data designated by a command requesting printout of the print data and controls the data sending/receiving means to send the print data to the document server when the data sending/receiving means receives the command requesting printout of the print data from the communications terminal." Still further, the contents server of claim 1 has "information fee accounting means which calculates an information fee relating to the print data and charges the user for the information fee when the data sending/receiving means sends the print data to the document server." The document server of claim 1 includes "communicating means which communicates various data including the print data with the contents server and the image forming apparatus. The document server of claim 1 also has "storage means which stores the print data sent from the contents server therein" and "data retrieving means which retrieves, from the storage means, the print data designated by a command requesting transmission of the print data sent from the image forming apparatus." The document server of claim 1 also has "print fee accounting means which calculates a print fee in accordance with the number of copies of the print data retrieved by the data retrieving means, and stores the print fee as print-fee-related accounting data." Still further, the document server of claim 1 has "communication controlling means which controls the communicating means to send the print data and the

print-fee-related accounting data to the image forming apparatus". Furthermore, the image forming apparatus of claim 1 includes "accepting means which accepts the command requesting transmission of the print data; transmitting means which sends the command requesting transmission of the print data inputted from the accepting means to the document server; receiving means which receives the print data and the print-fee-related accounting data from the document server; outputting means which prints out the received print data; and fee collecting means which collects the print fee from the user based on the print-fee-related accounting data when the receiving means receives the print-fee-related accounting data from the document server".

According to the invention of claim 1, an information fee relating to print data is charged in the contents server when a command requesting a printout is sent from a user's communication terminal. Print data and a print fee (not including the information fee) then are sent from the contents server to the image forming apparatus via the document server. Accordingly, printing and collection of the print fee are performed in the image forming apparatus. This aspect of the claimed invention and its advantages are explained clearly and succinctly in paragraph 0006 of the application. In contrast, the program disclosed in Nakanishi et al. performs checking of ID, decoding processing and charging of information fee in a server when a printout request is sent from a user's personal computer. Then, after the processing is performed, the server sends print data to the user's personal computer.

The system of claim 1 includes means for calculating and charging the information fee that are separate of the means for charging of the print fee, i.e., the information fee is calculated and charged at the content server and the print fee is charged

at the image forming apparatus. In this manner, charges are differentiated from each other and are affected by the contents or value of information to be provided, e.g., a print fee vs. a "rich contents" fee (see paragraph 0003 of the instant application). These fees can be charged to different accounts. The Nakanishi et al. reference does not disclose individually collecting an information fee and a print fee nor does the Nakanishi et al. reference disclose an image forming apparatus in the configuration that printing and collecting of a print fee are performed in the image forming apparatus. Therefore, it is submitted respectfully that amended claim 1 is patentable over Nakanishi et al. and is condition for allowance. Furthermore, claims 2-4 depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1 and are patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1.

In addition to the reasons stated above for claim 1, the contents server of claim 3 sends to the document server the print data in which additional information is added to the print date, e.g., rich contents, sent to the user's communication terminal, and an information fee is charged for the additional-information-added print data by adding a predetermined charge amount. Paragraphs 0211 and 0215 of Nakanishi et al. merely disclose that attribute information is contained in the content downloaded and the attribute information is used to control the content. The attribute information is not additional information for the user and the program of Nakanishi et al. does not charge a surcharge for the attribute information. Therefore, it is submitted respectfully that claim 3 is patentable over Nakanishi et al. and is condition for allowance.

Claim 1, claim 5 is directed to a document server similar to the document server of claim 1 and configured to receive print data from a contents server providing various information via the Internet and to send the print data to a remotely installed image

forming apparatus via the Internet to allow the image forming apparatus to print the print data. The document server includes "communicating means which communicates various data with the contents server and the image forming apparatus." Storage means "stores print data sent from the contents server therein." Data retrieving means "retrieves, from the print data storage means, the print data designated by a command requesting transmission of the print data from the image forming apparatus." Print fee accounting means "calculates a print fee in accordance with the number of copies of the print data retrieved by the data retrieving means and stores the print fee as print-fee-related accounting data." The document server of claim 5 also has "communication controlling means which controls the communicating means to send the print data and the print-fee-related accounting data to the image forming apparatus." The Nakanishi et al. reference does not suggest a print fee charged at the image forming apparatus and separate from the information fee. Rather, the charging of a fee in Nakanishi et al. is performed in a server when a print out request is sent from a user's personal computer. For at least the reasons set forth above, it is submitted that claim 5 and its dependent claim 6 are patentable over Nakanishi et al. and are in condition for allowance.

Amended claim 7 is directed to a contents server similar to the contents server of claim 1 and configured to send print data to a document server via the Internet and to allow a remotely installed image forming apparatus to print the print data via the Internet. The contents server of amended claim 7 has "data sending/receiving means which communicates various data including print data with a communications terminal of a user and the document server." A controlling means of claim 7 controls the data sending/receiving means to send the print data to the document server when the data

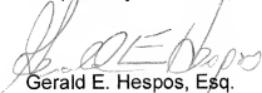
sending/receiving means receives a command requesting printout of the print data from the communications terminal. Claim 7 also defines an "information fee accounting means which calculates an information fee relating to the print data and charges the user for the information fee when the data sending/receiving means sends the print data to the document server." The information fee accounting means "is controlled to charge the user for the information fee relating to the print data when the data sending/receiving means sends the print data to the communications terminal." The controlling means of claim 7 controls the data sending/receiving means to send, to the document server, print data in which additional information is added to the print data sent to the communications terminal, as additional-information-included print data when the data sending/receiving means receives the command requesting printout of the print data, and controls the information fee accounting means to charge the user for the information fee relating to the additional-information-included print data by adding a surcharge when the data sending/receiving means sends the additional-information-included print data to the document server". The Nakanishi et al. reference does not suggest the controlling means for charging the user the information fee and the additional-information-included fee as a surcharge. For at least the reasons put forth above, it is respectfully submitted amended claim 7 is patentable over Nakanishi et al. and is in condition for allowance.

Claim 11 is directed to an image forming apparatus similar to the image forming apparatus recited in the system of claim 1. As explained above, the Nakanishi et al. reference does not suggest an image forming apparatus that receives print data from a remote document server and that has a fee collecting means to collect a print fee from the user of the image forming apparatus based on accounting data received from the

document server. Therefore, for at least the reasons put forth above, it is respectfully submitted claim 11 and dependent claim 12, are patentable over Nakanishi et al. and is in condition for allowance.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the invention defined by the original and amended claims herein is directed to patentable subject matter, and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicants' attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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